

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY

STEPHEN THOMAS YOUNG, Sr.,

Plaintiff,

v.

CAMDEN COUNTY
CORRECTIONAL FACILITY,

Defendant.

HONORABLE JEROME B. SIMANDLE

Civil Action

No. 16-cv-06939 (JBS-AMD)

OPINION

APPEARANCES

Stephen Thomas Young, Sr., Plaintiff Pro Se
550 Bilper Avenue, Apt. 6306
Lindenwold, NJ 08021

SIMANDLE, Chief District Judge:

1. Plaintiff Stephen Thomas Young, Sr. seeks to bring a civil rights complaint pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983 against the Camden County Correctional Facility ("CCCCF") for allegedly unconstitutional conditions of confinement. Complaint, Docket Entry 1.

2. 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2) requires courts to review complaints prior to service in cases in which a plaintiff is proceeding *in forma pauperis*. Courts must *sua sponte* dismiss any claim that is frivolous, is malicious, fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted, or seeks monetary relief from a defendant who is immune from such relief. This action is

subject to *sua sponte* screening for dismissal under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B) because Plaintiff is proceeding *in forma pauperis*.

3. For the reasons set forth below, the Court will: (1) dismiss the Complaint with prejudice as to claims made against CCCF; and (2) dismiss the Complaint without prejudice for failure to state a claim. 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(b)(ii).

4. First, the Complaint must be dismissed with prejudice as to claims made against CCCF because defendant is not a "state actor" within the meaning of § 1983. *See Crawford v. McMillian*, 660 F. App'x 113, 116 (3d Cir. Oct. 21, 2016) ("[T]he prison is not an entity subject to suit under 42 U.S.C. § 1983.") (citing *Fischer v. Cahill*, 474 F.2d 991, 992 (3d Cir. 1973)); *Grabow v. Southern State Corr. Facility*, 726 F. Supp. 537, 538-39 (D.N.J. 1989) (correctional facility is not a "person" under § 1983).

5. Second, for the reasons set forth below, the Court will dismiss the Complaint without prejudice for failure to state a claim. 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(b)(ii).

6. The present Complaint does not allege sufficient facts to support a reasonable inference that a constitutional violation has occurred in order to survive this Court's review under § 1915. Even accepting the statements in Plaintiff's Complaint as true for screening purposes only, there is not enough factual support for the Court to infer a constitutional violation has occurred.

7. To survive *sua sponte* screening for failure to state a claim¹, the Complaint must allege "sufficient factual matter" to show that the claim is facially plausible. *Fowler v. UPMS Shadyside*, 578 F.3d 203, 210 (3d Cir. 2009) (citation omitted). "A claim has facial plausibility when the plaintiff pleads factual content that allows the court to draw the reasonable inference that the defendant is liable for the misconduct alleged." *Fair Wind Sailing, Inc. v. Dempster*, 764 F.3d 303, 308 n.3 (3d Cir. 2014). "[A] pleading that offers 'labels or conclusions' or 'a formulaic recitation of the elements of a cause of action will not do.'" *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009) (quoting *Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544, 555 (2007)). Moreover, while *pro se* pleadings are liberally construed, "*pro se* litigants still must allege sufficient facts in their complaints to support a claim." *Mala v. Crown Bay Marina, Inc.*, 704 F.3d 239, 245 (3d Cir. 2013) (citation omitted) (emphasis added).

¹ "The legal standard for dismissing a complaint for failure to state a claim pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B)(ii) is the same as that for dismissing a complaint pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(6)." *Samuels v. Health Dep't*, No. 16-1289, 2017 WL 26884, slip op. at *2 (D.N.J. Jan. 3, 2017) (citing *Schreane v. Seana*, 506 F. App'x 120, 122 (3d Cir. 2012)); *Allah v. Seiverling*, 229 F.3d 220, 223 (3d Cir. 2000)); *Mitchell v. Beard*, 492 F. App'x 230, 232 (3d Cir. 2012) (discussing 28 U.S.C. § 1997e(c)(1)); *Courteau v. United States*, 287 F. App'x 159, 162 (3d Cir. 2008) (discussing 28 U.S.C. § 1915A(b)).

8. With respect to alleged facts giving rise to his claims, the Complaint states in its entirety: "Broke out in big rash that need[ed] bacterial ointment. I was placed in holding where the cell wasn't clean[,] toilets were overflowing and water in the sink didn't work." Complaint § III(C).

9. Plaintiff states that the purported events giving rise to these claims occurred: "1/2006 - 1/2016." *Id.* § III(B).

10. Plaintiff contends that he sustained "big red irritated [*sic*] rash on my back, stomach and face that I had to use an antibacterial ointment, and took an antibiotic." *Id.* § IV.

11. Plaintiff seeks "compensation for the encovience [*sic*] and embarrassment." *Id.* § V.

12. These claims must be dismissed without prejudice because the Complaint does not set forth enough factual support for the Court to infer that a constitutional violation has occurred.

13. First, to make out an Eighth Amendment claim in connection with the treatment a prisoner receives in prison and the conditions under which he is confined, a prisoner must show that the alleged deprivation was sufficiently serious and that the prison official acted with 'deliberate indifference to inmate health and safety.'" *Gause v. Diguglielmo*, 339 F. App'x 132, 134 (3d Cir. 2009) (quoting *Farmer v. Brennan*, 511 U.S. 825, 834 (1994)). "'[D]eliberate indifference' is 'the

equivalent of recklessly disregarding [a] risk' of serious harm to the prisoner." *Ibid.* (quoting *Farmer*, 511 U.S. at 836).

Here, Plaintiff's contentions that "toilets were overflowing and water in the sink didn't work" (Complaint § III(C)) do not allege the requisite "deliberate indifference" for Eighth Amendment purposes.

14. Second, with respect to Fourteenth Amendment due process issues in connection with the treatment a prisoner receives in prison and the conditions under which he is confined, the "proper inquiry is whether those conditions amount to punishment of the detainee. [U]nder the Due Process Clause, a detainee may not be punished prior to an adjudication of guilt in accordance with due process of law." *Bell v. Wolfish*, 441 U.S. 520, 535-36 (1979). *Accord Fuentes v. Wagner*, 206 F.3d 335, 341-42 (3d Cir.), *cert. denied*, 531 U.S. 821 (2000). Here, Plaintiff's contentions regarding the general working condition of toilets and sinks (Complaint § III(C)) do not allege the requisite demonstration of unconstitutional punishment for Fourteenth Amendment purposes.

15. Plaintiff may be able to amend the Complaint to particularly identify adverse conditions that were caused by specific state actors, that caused Plaintiff to endure genuine privations and hardship over an extended period of time, and that were excessive in relation to their purposes. To that end,

the Court shall grant Plaintiff leave to amend the Complaint within 30 days of the date of this order.²

16. Plaintiff is further advised that any amended complaint must plead specific facts regarding the conditions of confinement. In the event Plaintiff files an amended complaint, Plaintiff must plead sufficient facts to support a reasonable inference that a constitutional violation has occurred in order to survive this Court's review under § 1915.³

17. Plaintiff should note that when an amended complaint is filed, the original complaint no longer performs any function in the case and cannot be utilized to cure defects in the amended complaint, unless the relevant portion is specifically incorporated in the new complaint. 6 Wright, Miller & Kane, Federal Practice and Procedure 1476 (2d ed. 1990) (footnotes

² The amended complaint shall be subject to screening prior to service.

³ To the extent the complaint seeks relief for conditions Plaintiff encountered prior to September 29, 2014, those claims are barred by the statute of limitations. Claims brought under § 1983 are governed by New Jersey's two-year limitations period for personal injury. See *Wilson v. Garcia*, 471 U.S. 261, 276 (1985); *Dique v. N.J. State Police*, 603 F.3d 181, 185 (3d Cir. 2010). "Under federal law, a cause of action accrues when the plaintiff knew or should have known of the injury upon which the action is based." *Montanez v. Sec'y Pa. Dep't of Corr.*, 773 F.3d 472, 480 (3d Cir. 2014). The allegedly unconstitutional conditions of confinement would have been immediately apparent to Plaintiff; therefore, the statute of limitations on some of Plaintiff's claims expired two years after his release. In the event Plaintiff elects to file an amended complaint, he should limit his complaint to confinements in which he was released after September 29, 2014.

omitted). An amended complaint may adopt some or all of the allegations in the original complaint, but the identification of the particular allegations to be adopted must be clear and explicit. *Id.* To avoid confusion, the safer course is to file an amended complaint that is complete in itself. *Id.* The amended complaint may not adopt or repeat claims that have been dismissed with prejudice by the Court.

18. For the reasons stated above, the Complaint is: (a) dismissed with prejudice as to the CCCF; and (b) dismissed without prejudice for failure to state a claim.

19. An appropriate order follows.

February 8, 2017

Date

s/ Jerome B. Simandle

JEROME B. SIMANDLE

Chief U.S. District Judge